

MONS. BERNARDO ANTONINI  
Prothonotary Apostolic

\* Cimego (TN), Italy 20-10-1932  
Karaganda, Kazakhstan 27-03-2002

Mons. BERNARDO ANTONINI  
and the “Jesus the Priest” Institute

Fr. Bernardo Antonini was a priest of the Verona Diocese, a missionary in Russia and Kazakhstan, and a member of the “Jesus the Priest” Institute of the Pauline Family. When he made his perpetual profession of the evangelical counsels in 1991, he listed his reasons for entering this Institute founded by Fr. Alberione.

*Reasons for making his perpetual profession*

My reasons for professing the evangelical counsels and the special promise of fidelity to the Pope in the “Jesus the Priest” Institute, aggregated to the Society of St. Paul:

1. Because of the intrinsic value of the simple vows of obedience, perpetual chastity and poverty:
  - so as to honor the Most Holy Trinity;
  - so as to consecrate myself more intimately to the Living God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit;
  - as my personal gift-commitment to following our Lord Jesus Christ with my entire being;
  - for my greater sanctification and that of my neighbor;
  - so as to strain toward perfect “pastoral charity,” the means of sanctification for the priesthood (cf. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, nn. 12-14);
  - so as to carry out my pastoral ministry more effectively and forge a more profound bond of supernatural obedience and filial collaboration with my Bishop.
2. Because of the spiritual wealth to be gained in life and after death through membership in the Pauline Family (I will have suffrages offered for me throughout the world by the members of the 10 Institutes founded by Blessed James Alberione), a Family already present in the heavenly Jerusalem and in the pilgrim Church by means of her apostles scattered over the earth.
3. Because of the importance of the specific *Pauline charism*
  - which is centered on Christ;
  - which has a pneumatological-ecclesial dimension to its spirituality;
  - which reflects the universal/world-embracing heart of St. Paul.
4. Because of the timeliness of the Pauline apostolate and the urgent need of it in today’s world:
  - to give the *whole* Jesus Christ
  - to *all* people
  - using *every* means, especially the instruments of social communication (which Fr. Alberione called “today’s new pulpits”).

Resolution: I ask everyone for the gift of their prayers and on my part I will strive to live, witness to and preach the Christological, ecclesial, anthropological and eschatological significance of the beatitudes (Mt. 5:1-12).

*Rome, 5 April 1991*

### ***Brief Biography***

Mons. Bernardo Antonini was born in Cimego (Trent), Italy on 20 October 1932. While he was still a child, his family moved to Raldon, Verona. In 1942, he entered the diocesan seminary of Roverè Veronese and was ordained a priest on 26 June 1955. His first assignment was to S. Michele Extra Parish in Verona, where he served as assistant pastor. In 1962, he received a Master's Degree in Modern Foreign Languages and Literature from the Catholic University and two years later he obtained a Licentiate in Dogmatic Theology in Venegono. In 1975, he earned his Licentiate in Sacred Scripture from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome and became a professor of this subject at St. Zeno Theological Institute and St. Peter the Martyr Institute in Verona. But the hand of God was guiding Fr. Bernardo toward a very different apostolic path, although he was perhaps unaware of it. In 1977, he entered the "Jesus the Priest" Institute of the Pauline Family. There he met Fr. Stephen Lamera, the Institute's Delegate, to whom he confided his projects and apostolic anxieties. Although he continued to maintain strong ties with his diocese and to docilely obey his own Bishop, Fr. Bernardo's contact with the Pauline Family induced him to pattern his heart on that of St. Paul, focusing on the centrality of Christ and the need to take the Gospel to the modern world with modern instruments. Fr. Bernardo also cultivated a tender devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, whom he loved and prayed to throughout his life. In 1989, when it had become easier to enter Russia after Gorbachev's ascension to power, Fr. Bernardo went to Moscow as a student, but he quickly revealed himself to be a great missionary. He offered his services to Apostolic Nunzio Francesco Colasuonno, then to His Excellency Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz, the Bishop of Moscow. Fr. Antonini was the founder of Queen of Apostles Seminary, Moscow, in which he held the office of rector and also taught courses on Sacred Scripture. He was a tireless speaker at conferences and the founder-director of *Sviet Evangelia*, today the newspaper of the Russian Episcopal Conference. Yearning to help the Church's poorest dioceses and to carry out the apostolate wherever it was most needed, in 2001 Fr. Bernardo, with the permission of his Bishop, Flavio Roberto Carraro of Verona, offered his services to His Excellency Jan Pawel Lenga, Bishop of Karaganda, Kazakhstan, who appointed him vice-rector of the seminary and Episcopal Vicar for Pastoral Work. It was in Kazakhstan, on 27 March 2002, that the white stole symbolic of his priesthood was laid on his funeral casket, which today rests in the cemetery of Raldon, Verona. But Fr. Bernardo had already gone to meet the risen Christ, to whom he had offered such zealous witness in "Holy Russia."

"Jesus the Priest" and "Holy Family" Institutes

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